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Hello, my name is Fraz Lugay and I am a public school teacher at Weaver High School in Hartford Public Schools.

I am writing today in support of Raised Bill 948, An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut. As a Connecticut public school educator, I have seen firsthand the impact that funding inequity has had on my students. When the pandemic began and schools began teaching remotely in Spring 2020, the disparity between students of different economic backgrounds was put into stark relief: some students transitioned immediately into online learning because they had the resources, while some students did not get a district laptop because we originally had a shortage, or they could not get one because they had no transportation to pick one up at a school, or even if they got one they might have had no internet at home and could not get in contact with teachers.

At the time I thought that, if we taught remotely long term, some of these problems would be solved. But a year of hybrid teaching later, those disparities continue to unfold: I continue to have students who might have to miss a week of school because they have no internet, or their laptop has a problem and there's no easy way for them to get tech support or a replacement when the school is on the other side of the city. And as much as we educators try to support and reach out to every family, there are never enough mobile hot spots, never enough alternate non-computer learning resources, and never enough support staff or teachers available to help meet everyone's needs.

That's why I believe this bill must be passed. Funding inequities across and within our schools are preventing our students--particularly English Language Learners, students of color and children from low-income families--from getting the excellent education they deserve. Connecticut students have faced unprecedented hardship over the past year, and cannot wait multiple years to attend a fully-funded school.